

"Internal Revenue Service v. Waldschmidt (in re Bradley)" (M.d. Tenn. 1999), aff'g 222 B.R. 313 (Bankr. M.d. Tenn. 1998)), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5099. A communication from the Secretary of Transportation transmitting a draft of proposed legislation relative to the St. Lawrence Seaway; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5100. A communication from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Operations of the Glen Canyon Dam Pursuant to the Grand Canyon Protection Act of 1992"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-5101. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5102. A communication from the Executive Director, Committee for Purchase from People who are Blind or Severely Disabled, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule relative to additions to and deletions from the Procurement List, received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-5103. A communication from the Director, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance Program" (RIN1121-AA51), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5104. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "DoD Demonstration Program to Improve the Quality of Personal Property Shipments of Members of the Armed Forces"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5105. A communication from the Director, Defense Procurement, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Acquisitions for Foreign Military Sales" (DFARS Case 99-D020), received September 9, 1999; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5106. A communication from the Director, Defense Procurement, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Officials Not to Benefit Clause" (DFARS Case 99-D018), received September 9, 1999; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5107. A communication from the Deputy Chief, Programs and Legislation Division, Office of Legislative Liaison, Office of the Secretary, Department of the Air Force, transmitting a report relative to a multi-function cost comparison of the Base Operating Support functions at Beale Air Force Base, California; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5108. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "VISAS: Regulations Regarding Public Charge Requirements under the Immigration and Nationality Act, as Amended" (RIN1400-AA79), received September 3, 1999; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5109. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a Memorandum of Justification relative to the United Nations Assistance Mission to East Timor; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5110. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to

law, the Report on Religious Freedom; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. ROTH, from the Committee on Finance:

Report to accompany the bill (S. 1254) to establish a comprehensive strategy for the elimination of market-distorting practices affecting the global steel industry, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 106-155).

Report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1833) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2000 and 2001 for the United States Customs Service for drug interdiction and other operations, for the Office of the United States Trade Representative, for the United States International Trade Commission, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 106-156).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. CONRAD (for himself, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. CHAFEE):

S. 1574. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the interim payment system for home health services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. FRIST:

S. 1575. A bill to change the competition requirements with respect to the purchase of the products of the Federal Prison Industries by the Secretary of Defense; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 1576. A bill to establish a commission to study the impact of deregulation of the airline industry on small town America; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. CHAFEE, and Mr. WELLSTONE):

S. Res. 181. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the situation in East Timor; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CONRAD (for himself, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. CHAFEE):

S. 1574. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the interim payment system for home health services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

THE FAIRNESS IN MEDICARE HOME HEALTH ACCESS ACT OF 1999

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I am pleased to be joined by Senators FEINGOLD and CHAFEE in introducing the Fairness in Medicare Home Health Access Act of 1999. I am proud to say

that the Governing Board of the North Dakota Home Care Association, as well as the Visiting Nurse Association of America, have endorsed this legislation as a crucial step toward ensuring beneficiaries retain access to vital home care services.

As you know, home health care has proven to be an important component of the Medicare package because it allows beneficiaries with acute needs to receive care in their home rather than in other settings, such as a hospital or nursing home. In my state of North Dakota, home health care has been particularly important because it has allowed seniors living in remote, frontier areas to receive consistent, quality health care without having to travel long distances to the nearest health care facility.

Over the last three decades, we have witnessed significant increases in home health utilization as medical practices have shifted care from an inpatient to outpatient setting. To help address rising health care spending, the Congress included targeted measures in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA) to reduce costs and give providers incentives to become more efficient. In particular, the BBA directed the Health Care Financing Administration to implement an interim payment system for home health care until which time a prospective payment system could be instituted. While the interim payment system has allowed agencies to become more cost-effective, there are also concerns that it may be having some unintended consequences on agencies' ability to deliver quality, appropriate home care services to Medicare beneficiaries.

Mr. President, this legislation takes definitive steps to address various unintended consequences of the interim payment system and of the BBA in general.

Home health providers serving rural beneficiaries have been particularly affected by the interim payment system. As you know, home health care delivery is unique because unlike most other services, the health care provider must travel to the patient. Compared to urban agencies, rural home care providers must travel longer distances to serve beneficiaries and they often face poor weather and road conditions. Due to these constraints, agencies serving rural beneficiaries must visit patients less frequently; but during an isolated visit aides tend to spend more time with beneficiaries to ensure that they are receiving appropriate levels of care. Unfortunately, the per visit limits included in the interim payment system do not adequately account for the unique challenges of serving rural beneficiaries. This legislation revises the per visit cost limit to ensure agencies have the resources to deliver care to beneficiaries living in rural and underserved areas.

It also appears that the interim payment system does not adequately account for the needs of medically-complex beneficiaries. Various reports have